

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, JO, US

SUBJECT: SIGAL CASE

REFS: 76 AMMAN 7315 AND PREVIOUS

1. DEPT HAS RECEIVED INQUIRY FROM SENATOR CRANSTON DATED
JUNE 9 RE SIGAL CASE (REFTELS). WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR
ASSISTANCE IN HELPING US RESPOND TO CRANSTON ON CURRENT
STATUS OF THIS CASE, ALONG WITH ANY FURTHER INFO
JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES MAY NOW WISH TO DIVULGE CONCERNING IT.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SIGAL LETTER TO SENATOR CRANSTON,
FORWARDED TO US BY LATTER.

BEGIN TEXT: DEAR SENATOR:

AS ADVISED IN MY RECENT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH
MRS. CANNEN, I AM TAKING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE
WITH YOU IN REGARDS TO THE PROBLEMS WHICH I ENCOUNTERED
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IN JORDAN LAST SUMMER.

LAST YEAR, I DECIDED TO TAKE MY VACATION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST. BEING COGNIZANT OF THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS OF
RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES, I THOUGHT IT BEST TO

TRY TO ELIMINATE ANY UNNECESSARY CONTROVERSY. BEING THAT

MY FAMILY IS JEWISH, I DECLINED TO STATE MY RELIGION, (THE QUESTION WAS LEFT BLANK ON THE APPLICATION) WHEN APPLYING FOR A VISA AT THE JORDANIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. MY APPLICATION WAS DENIED, AND RETURNED.

AT THE EMBASSY IN PARIS, WISHING TO AVOID UNFAIR DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES COMMON TO THE MIDDLE EAST, I DECLARED MY RELIGION AS PROTESTANT. I HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT THIS IS A ROUTINE PROCEDURE WITH PEOPLE OF MY BACKGROUND. I WAS IMMEDIATELY ISSUED A TOURIST VISA. I ENTERED JORDAN THROUGH THE FRONTIER AT RAMTHA, ON OR AROUND JULY 13, 1976. I OBTAINED A PERMIT FROM THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM IN AMMAN TO VISIT ISRAEL.

UPON MY RETURN TO JORDAN FROM ISRAEL ON AUGUST 9, I WAS AT THE CHECKPOINT AT ALLENBY BRIDGE, IN CONVERSATION WITH AN ARAB AMERICAN IN WHICH MY RELIGION WAS INDIRECTLY DISCUSSED. I WAS IMMEDIATELY ARRESTED, AND WHEN I ATTEMPTED TO APPROACH WHAT WAS APPARENTLY A HIGH OFFICIAL OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WHO WAS ALSO AT THE BRIDGE CHECKPOINT, HE TOLD ME THAT HE WAS "WAITING FOR A GIRL ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE, AND COULDN'T BE BOTHERED WITH MY PROBLEMS AS HE HAD MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS ON HIS MIND." BECAUSE OF HIS NONCHALANT ATTITUDE, I WAS IMMEDIATELY THROWN INTO JAIL, AND WAS NOT ALLOWED ANY FURTHER CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS UNTIL I LEFT THE COUNTRY.

AFTER THE NIGHT IN JAIL WHERE NO REASON WAS GIVEN FOR MY ARREST, AND INCIDENTALLY I WAS NOT PERMITTED TO WEAR MY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GLASSES, I WAS TAKEN TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND THEN TO GENERAL INTELLIGENCE WHERE I WAS INTERROGATED AT LENGTH EXCLUSIVELY ABOUT MY RELIGION. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I MAINTAINED THAT MY FATHER'S RELIGION WAS PROTESTANT, NOT WISHING TO RISK ANY FURTHER DIFFICULTIES. I WAS THEN ABRUPTLY ORDERED OUT OF THE COUNTRY. THAT EVENING, I FLEW TO CAIRO.

THE NEXT DAY, AUGUST 11, I SPOKE TO THE AMERICAN CONSUL IN CAIRO, WHO ADVISED ME THAT SHE WOULD SEND A CABLE TO THE EMBASSY IN AMMAN, BUT ADVISED ME NOT TO GET INTO ANY MORE TROUBLE, AS SHE WAS VERY BUSY AND DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME TO BE BOTHERED WITH. I RETURNED TO THE U.S. ON SEPTEMBER 1, AND WAS INFORMED BY MR. CAROLAN OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT NO CABLE HAD EVER COME TO HIS KNOWLEDGE.

THE JORDANIAN CONSUL IN CAIRO ADVISED ME THAT I SHOULD GET A LETTER FROM MY "MINISTER" IN ORDER TO HAVE MY NAME

TAKEN OFF THE "BLACKLIST." ACCORDING TO MR. CAROLAN, THIS IS CONTRARY TO WHAT THE JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE ADVISED ABOUT NON-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES WITH REGARDS TO AMERICANS IN THEIR COUNTRY.

WHEN I RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES, I WAS IN CONTACT WITH MR. CAROLAN, THE HEAD OF THE JORDAN DESK AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT. IT HAS NOW BEEN ALMOST A YEAR, AND EVEN THOUGH I HAVE REPEATEDLY CONTACTED THE STATE DEPARTMENT, NO ONE HAS SHOWN MUCH INTEREST IN THE MATTER, GOING ONLY AS FAR AS TO GIVE THEIR OPINION THAT THE JORDANIAN EXPLANATION WOULD BE "SECURITY REASONS." IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO REPRESENT AMERICAN INTERESTS, NOT JUST TO PROTECT THEIR OWN WITH THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT. IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRESS, THIS BECOMES A SERIOUS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUESTION.

I AM EXTREMELY CONCERNED THAT MY NAME BE REMOVED FROM THE JORDANIAN BLACKLIST. ANY ASSISTANCE YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO RENDER IN APPLYING SOME PRESSURE ON THE STATE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED. AS I AM LEAVING AGAIN FOR MY HOLIDAYS ON JUNE 17, ANY RESPONSE PRIOR TO THAT WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED, AS I WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE JORDAN IN MY ITINERARY. THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME, I REMAIN, RESPECTFULLY YOURS, DAVID S. SIGAL.
END TEXT. VANCE

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Sent Date: 13-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
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